

## ASPARAGUS ON ASPARAGUS

*(from Happy in the Kitchen)*

24 large asparagus  
2 Tbs extra virgin olive oil  
1 tsp Dijon mustard  
1 Tbs fresh lemon juice  
pinch of sugar  
pinch of salt

Set aside 4 whole spears for the dressing. Cut off the tough bottom ends of all asparagus spears and set those aside for the as well. With a vegetable peeler, peel the remaining asparagus starting about one inch below the tip.

Have a bowl with ice cold water ready. Steam the asparagus spears for 5 to 6 minutes only, until they are just tender when gently pierced with the tip of a knife. When the asparagus is cooked, lift the spears with a pair of tongs and plunge them in the ice bath to cool, then remove and dry on kitchen paper or a towel.

Make the dressing: cut the reserved 4 asparagus spears into 1-inch pieces. Place in a small saucepan with the trimmed asparagus bottoms and add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water and the olive oil. Bring to a simmer, cover, and simmer gently for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the asparagus is completely softened. The water should have evaporated, and the asparagus should be stewing in oil only.

Transfer the asparagus into a blender or food processor and puree until completely smooth. Transfer to a small bowl and whisk in the mustard, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Serve the asparagus on a platter, with the vinaigrette in a small dish or ramekin on the side for dipping.